

Understanding Swedish Probate Records

Savannah Larson
Savannah.Larson@FamilySearch.org

OBJECTIVE

You will learn:

- What estate records are and what they contain
- When estate records are useful for your research
- Where you can access the records
- How to access the records
- How to interpret the record once you find it.

WHAT ARE PROBATE / ESTATE RECORDS?

- Theoretically, anyone who had an estate should have a probate filed soon after their death. While this was not always the case for various reasons, it's always worth checking.
- Probate assesses the estate, settles debts, establish heirs, and assign guardians where needed.
- In some areas this only happened with the first spouse died.

Sections of a Probate

Preamble – Date of proceedings, living spouse, children and other relevant family members and heirs. Guardians who were assigned and husbands of married daughters were also listed. The richest part of the document for a genealogist.

Inventory – List of everything owned in the following order: Real property, cash, coin, valuables, movable property, and farm assets. This can give you a glimpse into the life of the family and how they lived.

Assets and Debts – Total value of the estate is listed, and any outstanding debts are considered. Anyone who needed to be paid was paid out of the value of the estate. This could give you the names of family, friends and neighbors that would have been in their social circle.

When are Probates Useful?

- Proving parent/child and spousal relationships
- Providing closest relative relationships for people with no immediate family (e.g. the individuals siblings, nieces and nephews and etc.)
- Determining approximate ages for the children when other church records may not be present
- Learning about the family's status and daily life
- Finding a FAN club that can be helpful in solving a complex research problem

WHERE AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THESE RECORDS

Good – FamilySearch

<https://www.familysearch.org>

Digitized images of microfilm. English interface gets you to the correct book easily. Film notes at the beginning of every section of the scanned book. The note card will tell you the relevant dates and information that can be found in that section. It can be difficult to find the correct years and data you are looking for in the book.

1. Go to the FamilySearch wiki page for Sweden - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Sweden_Genealogy
2. Click on the county your ancestor lived in
3. Click on the parish your ancestor lived in
4. In the side bar on the wiki page for the parish there is a box called the Jurisdiction box. This box will tell you helpful information about the parish. Look for the information under the Härad. This is where you will find the probate records. Copy that place name.
5. Now that you have this information, go to the FamilySearch catalog at the following link: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>
6. Under the Place search box, paste the place name from the wiki, in this search box and select the standardized place name from the drop down. If the place does not pop up right away, try adding the name of the county to filter the results.
7. Click Search
8. In the results list, find the collection that includes Probate Records, and click on it to open all relevant collections.
9. Click on the most relevant looking result to open their catalog entry
10. Scroll down to the section called Film/Digital Notes and find the set of years you would like to search. Click on the camera to open the collection.
11. Use the black title board cards to assure you are on the right part of the film collection
12. Sift through the book page by page, looking for the preamble to identify each individual probate. Look for the name of the deceased and the name of their living spouse (if applicable) to help you find the correct probate.

WHERE AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THESE RECORDS

Better – Riksarkivet

<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/bouppteckningar>

Same images that are held on FamilySearch. Attached to a searchable index that includes most of Sweden. **Index is not available for Västra Götland, Värmland, Örebro, Malmö and Stockholm City.** Not all images are online, but you can order copies once you find them in the index.

1. Go the Riksarkivet website: <https://riksarkivet.se/>
2. Click on “Sök i arkiven”
3. Click on ”Specialsök”
4. In the list on this page, find “Bouppteckningar” and click on the link to open the database.
5. Type in the information you would like to search for and click on the blue button that says “Sök.”
6. Look through the results list to find the correct entry. If your ancestor is not coming up, try a few different search parameters to be sure you are not missing them.
7. If you find an entry that looks like your ancestor, click on their name to open the details.
8. This will give you the volume and probate #, as well as link you to the probate in many cases.
9. To open the probate image, find the green button that says “Bild” and click on it.
10. If there is no option to view the image, write down the relevant information from the index and copy the link to your clipboard.
 - a. Then, click on the link at the bottom of the entry that says “Beställ kopior” This will allow you to order the image from the Swedish National Archives.
 - b. Filling out the information given. If you need the fields in English so they are easier to understand, open the page in Google Chrome, right click on the page and select Translate to English.
 - c. The starting rate for a lookup is 225 kr + 4 kr for every page copied. Which typically ends up being between \$20 and \$30. The Archive will contact you if, for some reason, they cannot find the record, and give you the chance to approve any added research or charges.

WHERE AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THESE RECORDS

Best – ArkivDigital

<https://app.arkivdigital.se/>

High quality color images with a searchable index. ArkivDigital has the greatest coverage of indexed records, and images. Includes later time periods that are not on FamilySearch of Riksarkivet. This is the best place to start if it is an available option. You can find a list of all the searchable localities [here](#).

Search the Index

1. Go to app.arkivdigital.se
2. In the top right corner, select English as the default language for the page
3. Click on “Open new index search tab”
4. In the dropdown menu on the search bar, select “Estate Inventories”
5. In the Simple Search box type in the name of the person, the expected year for the probate and the name of the parish.
6. Click on the check box that says approximative search
7. Click the blue Search button.
8. If the search parameters do not bring up the desired results, adjust the search and try a few different variations so be sure you are not missing anything.

Search the Images

1. Go to app.arkivdigital.se
2. In the top right corner, select English as the default language for the page
3. Click on “Open new archive search tab”
4. Type in the name of the parish your ancestor lived in when they died and click “Search”
5. Select the correct parish from the Archive list and click on it to open the archive folder for the parish
6. In the archive folder you can see all the collections associated with the parish – scroll down past the parish books to find the estate inventories.
7. Select the year range that includes the years you are looking for and click on the link to open the archive. This will open a list of estate inventories for that place, for that set of years.
8. Scroll down the list to find a narrower set of years to search and find the book you would like to open.
9. Double click on the book to open the images.
10. Sift through the book page by page, looking for the preamble to identify the subject person for each probate. Look for the name of the deceased and the name of their living spouse (if applicable) to help you find the correct probate.

INTERPRETING THE RECORDS

The list on the following page, is a good starting point to reference as you translate your Swedish probates, for more comprehensive dictionaries and lists, visit the following resources:

Swedish genealogical word list -

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Swedish_Genealogical_Word_List

Swedish Historical Dictionary Database -

<https://swedishgenealogyguide.com/dictionaries/swedish-historical-dictionary-database-shdd>

Föremålslexikon över gamla redskap och föremål (A-L) -

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200203013732/http://www.domboksforskning.se/foremalslexion/foremalslexikon.htm>

Föremålslexikon över gamla redskap och föremål (L-Ö) -

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170630151716/http://www.domboksforskning.se/foremalslexion/foremalslexikon2.htm>

SWEDISH MONEY AND CONVERSIONS

FamilySearch Wiki- Swedish Money, Weights, and Measures -

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Swedish_Money,_Weights,_and_Measures_for_Family_History_Research

Interpreting Money in Swedish Records – Class Handout

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/c/c2/Interpreting_Money_in_Swedish_Records_2016.pdf

Historical Money Converter - <http://www.historicalstatistics.org/Jamforelsepris.htm>

SEK to USD converter - <https://www.unitconverters.net/currency/sek-to-usd.htm>

INTERPRETING PROBATE RECORDS

SWEDISH PROBATES WORD LIST

Arveskifte	Distribution of an inherited estate	Enligt	according to
Avgift	fee	Fil	file
Avliden	deceased, dead	Gravationer	claims against another person's estate.
Avvittring	Assignment of an inheritance to the children of a first marriage	Gammal	old
Bergslag	mining district	Gris	pig, hog
Beskrivning	description	Gryta, grytkrokar	kettle, kettle hooks
Betala, Betalt	pay, paid	Gröda	crops
Blaggarns skjortor	course fabric shirts	Grå	grey
Bo	to live, home, estate	Guld	gold
Bok, Böcker	book or books	Gångkläder	everyday clothing
Bord	table	Hattar	hat, hats
Borta	absent	Hemort, hemvist	domicile, residence
Bostad	domicile	Hoftyg	pliers
Bouppteckning	probate, estate inventory	Huggborrar	cutting instruments
Bro, Bror, Broder	brother	Hugg Yxa	chopping ax
Bröstarvinge	heirs	Hyllor	shelves
Burkar	jar, jars	Härad	civil district within a county
Byxor	pants, trousers	Häradsrätt	district court
Både, bägge	both	Hästar	horse, horses
Böter	fee, fine	Innehåll	contents
Diverse	miscellaneous	Innevarande	current
Därstädes	(of) that place	Kalk	chalice
Död, döda, döde	death, dead	Karmstol	armchair
Eldgaffel, eldtång	fire fork, fire tong	Kista	chest
Efterkommande	descendants	Klädesperseldlar	clothing
Efter sig lämnat	left behind, survived by	OR kläder	clothing
Egendom	property	Knäspännen	knee buckles
		Ko	cow
		Koffert	trunk

Koppar	copper	Skopa	scoop
Kreatur	livestock	Skåp	cupboard
Kruka	dish	Slöjd Yxa	woodworking axe
Kvarlåtenskap	Possessions left after death	Snöjackor	snow jackets
Linnetyg	linen	Soffa	sofa, couch
Ljusstake	candlestick	Spinräck	spinning wheel
Levande	living	Stolar	stools
Lärft skjortor	linen shirts	Strumpor	socks
Make	spouse, mate	Strykjärn	iron for clothing
Minderårig	underage	Stärbhus	death estate
Myndig	of legal age	Stäfv	wooden pail
Mösser	stocking caps	Stöfvlar	boots
Målsman	guardian	Säng, Sängkläder	bed, bedding
Nattkappor	night robes	Tacka med lamb	ewe with her lamb
Navrar	drills for wood	Tallrikar	plates
Närvarande	present	Tenn	pewter
Oangiven	not given	Tillgångar	assets
Obetalt	unpaid	Tina	wash tub
Omyndig	minor, not of legal age	Tröjor	sweaters
Ovan, ovanför	above	Underskrift	signature
Pannor	pans	Undertecknad	the undersigned
Pliktad	fined	Vanter, Wanter	mittens
Rock	coat	Vara	to be
Ränta	Interest, revenue	Väster	vests
Sedel	bill of debt	Vävtolar	hand loom
Silfver	silver	Ämbren	buckets
Skulder	debts	Änke	widow
Skjortor	shirts	Änkeman, Änkling	widower
		Ätt	family
		Överlevande	survivors